

and with a couple of brisk turns ties up the package and drops it on the ledge before him. Soon the hour approaches when a "despatch" is to be made—that is, when the last mail that is to go by a certain train must be sent out through the pneumatic tubes. So he proceeds to "tie out" his case, or rather those pigeonholes in it which have letters that go over the route of this particular train. As the packages are tied up they are carried over to the pneumatic tubes, stuffed into the carriers, and shot away underground to the postal station at the railway depot.

### The Red Letter Disappears

In due course, as we watch, the Red Letter is flicked into the Wisconsin box, and in a few minutes the box is tied out and the package with a dozen others dumped upon the tray by the pneumatic tubes. Our package is put into a carrier, the cover snapped to, and cabalistic chalk-marks inscribed thereon, that we may know it again. The carrier is stood in a corner till work shall come from us at the Grand Central Station to send it forward. For here the regular course must be modified a trifle; the pneumatic tube is wonderfully efficient, but a little small in diameter to carry a man, though a cat has gone through it without losing many of her lives. So the carrier waits while we—the followers of the clue—take the prosaic Subway to the Grand Central.

### It Appears Again

At another set of the barking and sighing mouths of the pneumatic tubes we take our stand to wait for the carrier. We watch the black cart-ridges come slipping out of one mouth across the oily table, to be seized, opened, and dumped of their contents, or dropped into another open mouth to go on their way to the Pennsylvania Station, as the chalk-marks command. Astonishingly soon after the telephone tells us that the carrier has started from

Madison Square a mile away, it slides from the tube before us. In an instant our package, Red Letter on top, has become one in an almost continuous line, flying through the air into a square orifice marked "North and West." Five seconds later it rides in a box on wheels across the floor.

The space about the pneumatic tubes at the Grand Central is a nexus of incoming and outgoing lines of letter mail. The tubes pour in their steady streams from the General Post-Office and the scattered stations up and down the city; on a broad table at one side are being emptied pouches from arriving trains; down from overhead slope the belt-conveyors bringing processions of letter packages from the distribution cases across the room and from the city division on a lower floor. The letter packages massed by these converging currents at this point are sorted by the eager fingers of clerks working at high pressure, and sent flying away again over their appointed routes—through the tubes to Brooklyn, General Post-Office, Pennsylvania Depot, and city stations; up on the endless belts for distribution cases and city divisions; into the gaping mouths of giant pigeonholes marked "East," "West and North," "City Rack," "Pitts. and South," and so on. From the outlets at the other end of these big sloping pigeonholes the letter bundles are tumbled at intervals, continually shortening as train time approaches, into wheeled boxes and hurried across the floor to the pouching-racks.

The Red Letter package has flashed into its pigeonhole "West and North," slid out and been rolled across the floor to the pouching-rack—an iron framework from which hang a score of canvas pouches with square-stretched mouths—and dropped into the pouch marked "N. Y. and Chi., No. 2—Train 35." These cabalistic abbreviations indicate to the initiated that this pouch is to go